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**United States and Pakistan Sign Trade and Investment Framework
Agreement**

WASHINGTON - U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick and Pakistan Minister of Finance Shaukat Aziz signed an agreement today that provides a forum for Pakistan and the United States to examine ways to expand bilateral trade and investment. Ambassador Zoellick and Pakistan Commerce Minister Humayun Akhtar Khan agreed in a meeting on June 9 to negotiate the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) that is being signed today.

The TIFA creates a Joint Council that will consider a wide range of commercial issues and sets out basic principles underlying the two nations' trade and investment relationship. The council will establish a permanent dialogue with the expectation of expanding trade and investment between the United States and Pakistan.

"I am pleased that we reached agreement on this TIFA while President Musharraf is in Washington to meet with President Bush. Today's signing marks an important moment in the U.S. trade and investment relationship with Pakistan," said Zoellick.

"This agreement strengthens economic ties with an important friend," he added. "I look forward to working with Minister Khan and Minister Aziz, both bilaterally and through the Doha Development Agenda, to explore new channels for trade and investment that will benefit both our peoples."

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